

Pentecost II 2020 Devotional

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Isaiah 56:1,6-8 Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32 Matthew 15:21-28

“Faith” is one of those words that makes me nervous.

“Faith” is a term we frequently throw out there, with little thought or regard as to what it actually signifies. Little faith or great faith? How do we tell the difference? What are the criteria? Who gets to decide? I ask these questions this week because it seems hardly accidental that the Canaanite woman’s “great faith” (15:28) follows Peter’s apparent “little faith” (14:31). Of course, everybody wants more faith, right? “More” is certainly better than some, or average, or little. A central question posed by this passage is, “What made her faith great?” which elicits a follow up question, “How can my faith be greater?” or something along those lines



Faith is as individual as the woman in this story. Why is her faith great? Is it because she is persistent? So, if I am more persistent -- and about what, I might ask -- will my faith be greater? Is her faith great because she names her plight, she is honest, she names her need? Is her faith great because she asks for help? Is her faith great because she gets Jesus to change his mind? Is her faith great because she recognizes who Jesus is? Is her faith great because she thinks Jesus can do something to help her daughter? Is her faith great because she rebuts Jesus’ proposed boundaries? And then is faith the willingness to go past these boundaries, set either by others or those we place on ourselves?

A lot of how we talk about faith indeed ends up being about boundaries. Life’s consequences are attributed to whether or not someone has enough faith to walk through this most difficult of experiences. “Just have faith!” Well, how much?

Maybe the Canaanite woman’s story is about what faith *looks like* in action. What do you think? Is it about our response and even our demonstration of the dynamism of faith in action?

So, let me be bold. “Faith” is not a static statement of status quo confessions, but lays claim on how you are in the world, how you choose to be, how you decide to live, in each specific moment of your life...Amen!

With faith in Christ,

Pastor Dave Beard